

Brandon Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1913.

Thetford, March 7th, 1914.

TO THE BRANDON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1913.

During the year 72 deaths were registered in the district, giving an annual death rate of 12.3 per 1,000, to which must be added 8 deaths of residents living in Public Institutions outside the district, making the nett death rate 13.8 per 1,000; this death rate is the highest for the last five years. 16 of these deaths were in persons between 70 and 80 years of age, 10 of persons 80—90 years of age, and 2 of persons over 90 years of age.

4 deaths were due to Influenza, 1 to Erysipelas, 6 to Phthisis, and 3 to Cancer.

There were 17 deaths of infants under a year old, of which 6 were due to premature birth, giving an infant mortality of 123.2 per 1,000 births; this is the highest rate since 1908 when it was 139.

138 births were registered during the year, giving an annual birth rate of 123.5 per 1,000.

29 cases of Infectious Disease were notified during the year; these included 3 cases of Erysipelas, 13 of Scarlet Fever, and 13 of Tuberculosis.

The whole district covers an area of 37,759 acres, with a population of 5,863, and with the exception of the township of Brandon, with a population of over 2,000, consists of scattered villages and isolated cottages, the inhabitants being chiefly employed in agriculture.

Water Supply.—The township of Brandon has an excellent water supply, but the rest of the district is supplied by wells, most of which are surface wells, and hence liable to pollution.

Sewerage and Drainage.—There is no system of Sewerage and Drainage throughout the district. In Brandon there are a few cesspools, and a good many of the houses have pail closets, otherwise the privy system is universal throughout the district; and I regret to say that Brandon has not yet adopted any Scavenging System. Each occupier is responsible for the disposal of the house refuse and night-soil.

1,873 inspections have been made by the Sanitary Inspector, and 2 Statutory notices served, with the result that the nuisances were abated. 724 nuisances were discovered and abated, 360 informal notices were served and in other cases verbal instructions proved sufficient. The nuisances referred to consisted chiefly of accumulation of house refuse, privy vaults and minor dilapidations.

One "Offensive Trade" is carried on in the district, namely a knacker's premises, which has been inspected at frequent intervals during the year,

There are no "Common Lodging Houses" in the district.

The sanitary condition and water supply of the Elementary Schools is satisfactory, with the exception of the Brandon Schools, the water supply of which proved on analysis to be polluted. The schools were free from serious epidemics during the year.

Milk Supply.—The milk supply in the district is inadequate; in many of the villages it is almost impossible to buy milk. Owing to the poor quality of the grazing the standard of the milk is not high.

The dairies and cowsheds in the district are regularly inspected, and are clean and well-kept.

Slaughter-houses in a district like this are small and few in number, but are in good condition, clean and well-kept.



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No carcases or parts of carcases have been condemned for Tuberculosis.

The housing accommodation for the working classes is fairly good, if compared with other rural districts; with a few exceptions the houses are kept clean and tidy, but accumulations of house refuse in the vicinity of the cottages are still frequently met with.

Only 3 new cottages have been built in the district during the year, but the working class population is almost stationary.

There are no "Building Bye-Laws" in the district.

Under the Housing and Towns Planning Act 150 inspections have been made, 5 houses were represented as being unfit for habitation, 5 closing orders were made, 3 of the houses were put in good repair, and 2 are still in hand; 12 cottages were put in good repair without closing orders being made. The chief defects found were insufficient light, ventilation, want of paving and dampness.

No. of Dwelling houses Inspected.	No. of houses unit for habitation.	No. of representations made to obtain closing orders.	No. of closing orders made.	No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied without closing orders.	No. of dwelling houses made fit after closing orders.	General character of defects found to exist.
150	5	5	5	12	3	Insufficient light, ventilation, want of paving, and dampness.

Under the Factory and Workshops Act, 106 inspections were made, and 8 nuisances were found and remedied.

There is no Isolation Hospital, except for small-pox in the district. This is a joint hospital for the Thetford Urban and Rural and Brandon Rural Districts.

The method of dealing with infectious disease in the district is as follows:—Upon receipt of notification the house is visited by the Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector, enquiries are made as to the origin of the disease and the premises inspected, the necessary disinfectants are supplied, and instructions as to the isolation of the patient as far as possible are given. When necessary the children are excluded from school, and notices are given to the Head Teacher of the school in the district, directing that all children from the infected house should be excluded from school until further notice is given. The medical man in attendance notifies the Sanitary Inspector when the case is ready for disinfection and the house is then thoroughly disinfected by spraying and fumigating with Formalin. The bedding is destroyed by burning where necessary, the owners being compensated by the Council.

The Council supply Diphtheria Antitoxin for the treatment of the patient and for the inoculation of contacts in necessitous cases, they also pay for the examination of Swabs in cases of suspected Diphtheria, and for the Widal blood reaction in cases of suspected Typhoid.

On receipt of a notification of Tuberculosis, I visit in company with the Sanitary Inspector, and in necessitous cases supply Sputum Flasks, Disinfectants, and printed instructions. The cases are subsequently visited frequently in order to see that the instructions are carried out. In cases of death or removal the house and contents are Disinfected by Spraying and Fumigating with "Formalin."

There is no Hospital for the treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the district, but residents are admitted to Sanatoria outside the district.

I have received great assistance from your Sanitary Inspector during the year, and would again emphasize and commend the praiseworthy manner in which he carries out his many duties.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEOFFREY COWAN, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

